

MY BIBLE

GOAL: *To encourage and resource parents to use the bible at home and think about the messages they are giving their children about god's word.*

Preparation:

- Pictures of 15 key Bible characters
- Poster (see *Extra Resources* on website)
- Woven kete for each child
- Resources for families to make the Bible kete at home (see *Extra Resources* on website)
- Bible story books
- Plus the extra resources on the website

Morning tea: (10 min)

Start with morning tea so parents have time to connect with each other. Introduce any new parents. Alternatively you could allow some time for this at the end of your session.

Explain it: Why do we run these sessions for parents? (5 min)

Take a few minutes to reinforce to your parents the importance of their role in passing on faith to their children. Sell the vision by saying something like, 'You are the biggest influence in your children's lives and the church wants to partner with you to help make the most of these early formational years.'

You could share some information from 'The Bible Society Literacy Survey' which shows that almost half of Christian parents are not reading the Bible to their children. (See *Extra Resources* on website: [2015biblicalliteracysurvey-summary](#).)

Overall, 46% of parents believe Bible stories are important because they provide values for a good life. In all, 29% of all parents read Bible stories to their child at least once a year, rising to 54% of Christian parents.

Say something like: 'As Christians, we know that reading the Bible and talking to our children about it is important—but sometimes it is hard to actually make it happen.'

The aim of this session is to encourage you to think about how to use the Bible with your children and to give you some ideas and resources to take home to help you to do it.'

Explain it: Why is the bible important? (10 min)

Activity and Discussion: Find A4 pictures of 15 key Bible characters. On the back of each picture, write one word of Psalm 119:105—“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

Hide the pictures of Bible characters around the room for the children to find. Once they have found the pictures, get them to stand at the front of the room holding their picture up so everyone can see them. If you have less than 15 children, get parents to help too. Ask for some parent volunteers to help arrange the pictures in chronological order. Give them a short time limit. Acknowledge that this can be challenging and it's not a test!!

Say something like: ‘These are some of the people who are part of the Big God Story. Let's see if we have the order right.’

Ask the children to turn their picture around and show the word on the back. It will become clear if some are out of order. Make any adjustments and read the verse out loud. Say, ‘This is what the Bible is. But what does this mean?’

Tell the children to return to sit with their parents. Say, ‘ask the adult who came with you if they know what Psalm 119:105 means.’ After a short time, ask for some ideas. Reinforce that this is why the Bible is important, because it guides our lives.

Explain it: What do we want our children to know about the bible? (5 min)

In the activity the families have just done, certain ideas about the Bible have been communicated. Ask the parents what they have noticed about the way we have talked about the Bible. (e.g. the Bible is one big story, the Bible is the story of God, the Bible is important for guiding our lives, the Bible has lots of people in it who God uses etc.)

Display the poster, ‘What are we teaching our children about the Bible’. This is an opportunity to share with parents what your ministry is teaching about the Bible so they can reinforce the same ideas at home. Explain that this is one way a church and home partnership can work. Give parents a copy of this to take home. *(See Extra Resources on website: What are we teaching our children about the bible. You are welcome to use this if you would like or you may prefer to make your own version.)*

Practice it: Respond in family groups to a bible story (10 min)

One of the things we want to encourage from a young age, is engagement with the stories of the Bible. These aren't just static stories, they are alive and active and can change us. They require something from us in return... to think, to imagine, to wonder... not just know the facts of the stories. What could this look like for our preschool/early school children?

Explain what wonder questions are (ie open ended questions which encourage children to think about the stories. They don't have factual, knowledge based answers and can be as simple as ‘I wonder what you liked about this story?’ or ‘I wonder what you think God is like in this story?’)

Give families an opportunity to read a Bible story that they can wonder about together with their children.

For example, read the *Jesus Storybook Bible* version of Psalm 23 to the whole group.

Ask a wonder question for families to answer such as, ‘I wonder what the shepherd who looks after the lambs is like?’

Another option is to give families a drawing exercise to help them respond to the story. (See *Extra Resources on website: Read-and-draw-scripture-Psalm-23, as an example*). This could work in conjunction with a wonder question.

You could give an opportunity for families to share what came up in their conversations.

Inspire them: Share some stories (5 min)

See if you can find someone who has a brief story to tell about a special time of reading the Bible with their children or who has an example of a particular way of including Bible reading into the home.

Create it: Make a resource to take home to encourage bible reading (15 min)

Provide a woven kete for each child and enough resources so each family can put together a Bible Kete to take home. These can contain things like; a Bible story, an exercise book, some pens, stickers, Big God Story characters etc. This is intended to be a pack families can take home to use when they read Bible stories. Children can use the exercise book to draw their responses to the stories they are sharing as a family and the kete becomes a place to store their special Bible reading materials.

Families can spend the remaining time together helping their children fill their kete and decorating the covers of their exercise book. (See *Extra Resources on website: my bible notebook for examples of title pages you could provide for families to glue on their books.*)

Alternatively, you could do this exercise before the Practice It section, so families can use their journal to respond to the story you read.